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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6052  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6782  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1398  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5282

UNCLAS BANGKOK 000394

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP F/O AND EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OTRA](#) [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: THAILAND COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR EAP A/S CHRISTOPHER  
HILL AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT YURI KIM

REF: STATE 13417

11. Post warmly welcomes and grants country clearance to EAP  
A/S Hill and Special Assistant Kim for their February 22-24  
visit.

12. Hotel reservations have been made at:

-- Grand Hyatt Erawan, 494 Rajadamri Road, confirmation  
number is 22935280.  
Tel: (66-2) 254-1234  
Fax: (66-2) 254-6308

The room rate is USD 146 (taxes and American breakfast  
included) and is within per diem (lodging \$146, M&IE - \$72).

13. The Embassy point of contact is:

Name: David R. Greenberg, Political Officer  
Work phone: (66-2) 205-4816  
Cell phone: (66-81) 920-1084  
Unclassified E-mail Address: GreenbergDR@state.gov

The after-hours emergency number for the Embassy is (66-2)  
205-4108.

14. Ambassador John, Mr. Greenberg, and an Embassy expediter  
will meet and assist you at the airport.

15. Although visas are not required of holders of U.S.  
passports (whether diplomatic, official or tourist) who plan  
to stay fewer than 30 days, post nonetheless recommends that  
TDY travelers obtain an official visa before coming to  
Thailand.

16. SECURITY INFORMATION

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1A. CRIME:  
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-- Crime is generally non-confrontational in nature.  
Criminal acts are usually crimes of opportunity such as  
purse-snatchings, thefts of unattended property, and pick  
pocketing. Visitors should be especially alert in crowded  
buses, streets, and markets or while on "tuk-tuks." Visitors  
should lock valuables in hotel safe deposit boxes not in  
their hotel rooms.

-- Be aware of common scams and frauds (including credit  
cards, in particular). Visitors should only use credit cards  
at well-established and reputable businesses. Visitors  
should be careful when purchasing branded or copyrighted  
goods. There are many pirated counterfeit products in the

marketplace; their purchase is against post regulations and it is illegal to import these products into the U.S. Be wary of common scams for jewelry, suits, silks, gems, or antiquities. There are no Thai government-owned or sponsored gem stores. If victimized, seek assistance from Tourist Police by dialing 1155.

-- Visitors are cautioned from visiting bars involved in the sex trade. Many of these operate illegally and clients can be subject to RTG law; they often charge exorbitant drink prices and cover charges. There are also many incidents of crime against patrons in these establishments. Drugging and robbing of unwary individuals is not uncommon. There are sporadic reports of victims being drugged and robbed or beaten when visiting these bars. The drugs used can cause serious temporary memory impairment, unconsciousness, and if overdosed, death.

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B. TRAFFIC:  
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-- The traffic situation in Bangkok can be difficult and dangerous for both pedestrians and vehicle occupants. All visitors should be alert to traffic patterns and unexpected motorcycle drivers. Traffic drives on the left-hand side, opposite from the U.S., although there may be a bus lane that flows in the opposite direction. Pedestrians should use the overhead walkways for crossing busy streets.

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C. TERRORISM:  
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-- The threat from transnational terrorist groups to the U.S. Mission in Bangkok is currently ranked medium. Despite stepped up RTG efforts to monitor its borders, they remain relatively porous and allow easy illegal access. Transnational terrorist groups, including Al-Qa'ida and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), have utilized Thailand as a transit point.

-- The threat from indigenous terrorist groups is currently rated as low. There is no evidence to indicate that indigenous terrorist groups are planning acts against U.S. personnel or facilities. The far south of Thailand has experienced incidents of criminally and politically motivated violence, including incidents attributed to armed local Muslim separatist groups. Although Americans have not been specifically targeted in the past, the indiscriminate nature of past attacks by these groups -- including bombings of public places -- indicates a potential threat to American citizens.

-- The State Department is concerned that there is an increased risk of terrorism in Southeast Asia, including Thailand. Travelers to Thailand should therefore exercise caution, especially in locations where Westerners congregate, such as clubs, discos, bars, restaurants, hotels, tourist areas, and other places frequented by foreigners.

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D. OTHER SECURITY TIPS:  
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-- Visitors should avoid making any pejorative comments about any members of the Thai Royal Family or engaging in disrespectful conduct within temples or toward religious objects. Such behavior can result in arrest and/or expulsion from Thailand.

-- Precautions should also be taken not to discuss sensitive or classified matters outside secure environments or over unsecured and/or cellular telephones, and to securely safeguard classified or sensitive materials at the Chancery and not at hotels or residences.

-- Visitors should also review the State Department,s Consular Information Sheet for Thailand and the most recent Worldwide Caution Public Announcements, which are available via the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. DOD personnel must review the PACOM Force Protection Levels for Thailand found at <http://131.84.1.218/staff/at/athome.shtml>.

-- In essence, visitors to Bangkok must exercise appropriate caution and be alert to their surroundings with regard to their personal security. Suspicious incidents/activities should be reported to RSO Bangkok (tel. 02-205-4000, 24 hrs/day). On behalf of US Embassy Bangkok, we hope you have a safe and pleasant visit.

JOHN